

## House Natural Resources Committee hearing on OCS leasing

On June 6, 2013 and June 11, 2013 the House Natural Resources Committee held hearings on the Offshore Energy and Jobs Act (H.R. 2231). The proposed bill would open new outer continental shelf (OCS) land for leasing, unlocking an estimated 2.5 billion barrels of oil, and more than 7.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas for production.

Subcommittee Chairman Doug Lamborn (R-CO) and other supporters of the bill argued that although oil and gas production in the U.S. has increased in the past year, production on federal lands has decreased. They also argued that because exploration and full-scale production and of oil and natural gas reserves takes time to develop, we need to begin the process as early as possible.

Opponents of the bill, including Subcommittee Ranking Member Rush Holt (D-NJ), said that since production in the U.S. is at a high, we do not need to start leasing new areas. Michael Conathan, Director of the Ocean Policy Center for American Progress Action Fund, claimed that leasing new areas would unnecessarily expose new areas to the risks of drilling. Instead, Conathan said, we should begin focusing on alternative energy sources, such as offshore wind.

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